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TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4048
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1865
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1732
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2301
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: POST RESPONSE TO CUSTOMS CHAIRMAN
CONCERNS OVER DOD COUNTERNARCOTICS SUPPORT

REF: A. SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//GSA COUNTERNARC//121132Z
JUN 08
[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 0881

[1](#)1. Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY: At a meeting on May 12 at the Department of State (Ref. A), the former Chairman of Turkmenistan's State Customs Service raised some concerns regarding discrepancies in Department of Defense Counternarcotics support at two Border Control Checkpoints. On July 10, Emboffs discussed the issue as requested with new State Customs Service Chairman Yaylym Berdiyev. Berdiyev was unaware of the issues raised at the meeting in Washington, but intends to review the details of the border control checkpoint construction projects. Both sides agreed to work together to resolve any issues and continue cooperation. The Nevada National Guard Partnership Project was aware of some of the issues and had been working to resolve them. Guard representatives said that many of the issues have already been resolved. Apparently, inaccurate inventory procedures by a sub-contractor under the Nevada National Guard Project largely led to Customs' concerns. Embassy believes that the Nevada National Guard Project needs to exercise greater oversight of its program. END SUMMARY.

THE ALLEGATIONS

[1](#)3. (SBU) Former State Customs Service Chairman Muratberdi Annalyev raised concerns regarding the DoD/CENTCOM Counternarcotics-funded border control checkpoint construction program at a May 12 meeting at the Department of State (Ref. A) during an EXBS-funded trip to the United States. He alleged that the Altyn Asyr and Imamnazar border control checkpoints were not fully operational, the equipment provided at these two sites did not match the requested list of equipment, and the equipment provided was a cheap version of what they requested. Annalyev was fired before Post could meet with him in person, and his dismissal means we can no longer reach him to clarify the basis for his list of concerns.

POST'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES

¶4. (SBU) What follows is a description of Post's understanding of the issues based on an interview and follow-up information from the Nevada National Guard Project Leader, who is the program manager for the border control checkpoint construction program. The Project Leader said that he had been aware of at least some of Customs' concerns and had been working for some time with lower-level Customs officials and the prime contractor, Gap Inshaat, to resolve them. In addition to addressing the specific concerns below, the Project Leader believed that Annalyev may have had other motives -- still unknown to us -- for raising his concerns the way he did during the 12 May meeting with U.S. officials.

OPERATIONAL STATUS OF BORDER CONTROL CHECKPOINTS

¶5. (SBU) According to the Project Leader, the Altyn Asyr customs station chief said during a site visit on July 9 that the border control checkpoint was fully operational with the singular exception of a section of pavement which had deteriorated prematurely. The checkpoint was in operation at the time of the visit and the condition of the deteriorated pavement section was not affecting checkpoint operations. The Project Leader said the pavement is under contractor warranty and will be repaired.

¶6. (SBU) Post understands, based on several USG visits to Imamnazar, that the checkpoint is and always has been operational since its opening in August 2007.

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INVENTORIES AND PERCEPTIONS

¶7. (SBU) Annalyev's concerns over the property on the inventory lists at the two sites appear to be based on a variety of reasons, including poor inventory practices, Turkmenistan government pressure to turn over the Imamnazar checkpoint before the inventory was complete, misunderstandings over the expected quality and quantity of equipment provided, and Customs officials' reports that items were missing or unaccounted for during subsequent internal inventories, when in reality they just could not find or identify them. (For example, two missing pumps at Altyn Asyr were actually imbedded within the plumbing. Two drinking water pumps at Imamnazar were supposedly missing, however, one is on site, and the other is in Ashgabat for service under warranty.) Post is not aware of any party's intentional wrongdoing or intent to deceive any other party involved.

¶8. (SBU) Due to the timing of the grand opening of the Imamnazar border control checkpoint in August 2007, State Customs Service insisted on receiving keys before the joint inventory could be conducted. The State Customs Service, Gap Inshaat, and Nevada National Guard Project Leader later made a joint inventory, but by then, some of the questions over accountability were also present. Turkmenistan also later requested a dollar value for each item on the inventory. Nevada National Guard Project Leader assigned the task to Gap Inshaat, which produced inventories for the border control checkpoints containing greater detail than in the joint inventories. These inventories did not completely match. Post believes that the differences between these inventories gave rise to Annalyev's concerns as expressed on May 12.

¶9. (SBU) No major discrepancies existed over the Altyn Asyr property inventory, which was conducted prior to the turnover of the checkpoint in November 2006. The State Customs Service, Gap Inshaat, and Nevada National Guard Project Leader also recently signed a new joint inventory at the Altyn Asyr border control checkpoint that reportedly has clarified any and all apparent "administrative" disputes.

CHEAPER EQUIPMENT PROVIDED THAN REQUESTED

¶10. (SBU) Regarding Annalyev's claim that the program was providing cheaper versions of equipment than what was requested," the joint inventory lists a Rapiscan scanner Meteor 150 model, but Gap Inshaat's inventory lists a more advanced, more expensive Meteor 250. This led to the misperception that the United States had promised a Meteor 250 but only delivered a "cheap version" of a lesser model. Nevada National Guard Project reports that the United Nations procured the scanner at Altyn Asyr. The original order was for a Meteor 150. The United States procured the scanner at Imamnazar, for which the original order was also a Meteor 150. The original description of the border control checkpoint design provided to Turkmenistan merely noted "scanner" without any mention of a particular model. Also, Turkmenistan did not provide a written statement of requirements. It appears that Gap Inshaat's inaccurate accounting on the inventory was the source of the problem. Nevada National Guard Project's lack of quality control led to an inaccurate reflection of the project results.

PROVIDED EQUIPMENT DOESN'T MATCH REQUESTED EQUIPMENT

¶11. (SBU) According to the Project Leader, Annalyev's reference to "requested equipment" also is misleading since Customs never formally requested the vast majority of equipment it received at these two sites. Rather, the equipment list was generated off the architectural drawings and other planning documents used by Gap Inshaat to build the

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checkpoints. Customs' approval in essence was obtained through its agreement to the drawings and supporting documents. Furthermore, the documents used for accountability purposes by, between, and within the USG, Gap Inshaat, and the Turkmenistan government are not seamless and have created additional layers of complexity to achieving agreement on property accountability at these sites.

MISSING INVENTORY - IMAMNAZAR

¶12. (SBU) The Nevada National Guard Project Leader is unable to adequately explain numerous discrepancies on the Imamnazar inventory and is currently working to resolve them.

- The joint inventory listed six expansion tanks at Imamnazar, but only four were located on site. Nevada National Guard Project stated they "don't know why there was a joint inventory of six."
- The joint inventory listed four filters, but only two were found on site. Again, "We don't know why there was a joint inventory of four."
- The joint inventory listed four portable sump pumps, but now there are only two on site.
- The joint inventory listed 58 armchairs. While Nevada National Guard Project had ordered 70 and Gap Inshaat indicated 70, there are only 61 on site.
- The joint inventory listed 48 desks. Gap Inshaat listed 47 but State Customs Service could only find 46 on site.

This pattern repeats for other items such as wardrobes, regular chairs, and a missing trash cart. In some cases, the inventories match, but items still are missing. It is not clear whether Gap Inshaat failed to deliver goods according to contract, or whether the items were delivered but later stolen. Post's concern is that the initial inventories did not match, raising questions about Nevada National Guard Project accountability and oversight in managing its construction projects. The fact that some items are now missing is a matter of State Customs Service internal accountability, but from the outset there should be no question of what the United States provided and at what cost. Nevada National Guard's approach to reach a resolution with State Customs Service has been to agree to a new inventory listing the current number of items on site. However, it is

not yet clear if both parties agree about which organization is responsible for the missing items.

POST'S MEETING WITH NEW CUSTOMS CHAIRMAN BERDIYEV

¶13. (SBU) Emboffs met with Berdiyev on July 10 to discuss the stated discrepancies and our ongoing cooperation (Ref. B). Berdiyev previously served as the Chairman of the State Immigration Service and was familiar with U.S. counternarcotics efforts to cooperate with Turkmenistan. He was grateful for previous U.S. assistance and responded positively that we can work together to resolve any issues. He admitted that he has not yet reviewed the entire matter concerning border control checkpoint discrepancies, but that he intends to conduct a full review of all purchases covering the last 8-10 years, including the border control checkpoints. He mentioned only the crumbling pavement problem at Altyn Asyr as an issue that he knew about.

¶14. (SBU) COMMENT: Relations between the Embassy and the new State Customs Service Chairman indicate that the issue of mismatched inventories is one both sides can overcome. Fortunately, several of the discrepancies were easily explained and therefore are resolved. A concern remains about accountability and necessary internal quality controls in Nevada National Guard Project's management of Department of Defense's Counternarcotics projects. The Nevada National Guard Project Leader is aware of this concern and is working to resolve the discrepancies on the inventories. However,

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the inaccurate inventories raise the question of whether calculations for billing are reliable. END COMMENT.
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